DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 133 650 CG 010 994

AUTHOR Donnangelo, Frank P.
TITLE The Relationship of Selected Variables to Counselor Performance.
PUB DATE [76]
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Evaluation; *Counselor Performance; Counselors; *Decision Making; Higher Education; Multiple Regression Analysis; *Performance Factors; Personnel Selection; *Predictor Variables; Questionnaires; *Research Needs

ABSTRACT

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to explore the possibility of predicting the quality of a counselor's performance from the values of five predictor variables. The opportunity to make such predictions could prove useful to Deans of Students in making decisions concerning personnel deployment, in-service training, reappointment, tenure, and promotion. (Author)

**********
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
**********

ED133650

# The Relationship of Selected Variables to Counselor Performance

Frank Peter Donnangelo

Department of Student Development

Bronx Community College, City University of New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 010 994

Running Head: Same As Above

## Abstract

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to explore the possibility of predicting the quality of a counselor's performance from the values of five predictor variables. The opportunity to make such predictions could prove useful to Deans of Students in making decisions concerning personnel deployment, in-service training, reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

## The Relationship of Selected Variables to Counselor Performance

At present, a large group of young people whom colleges used to dismiss as "not college material" are walking through the open doors of institutions of higher education. In fact, these educationally disadvantaged students constitute an ever increasing proportion of the college population. For one reason or another, these students have not done well in school; they are supposedly not prepared to undertake college work.

The City University of New York (CUNY), through the establishment of special programs, has developed a strong commitment to offering a meaningful and enriching collegiate experience to educationally disadvantaged students.

In the mid-1960's, CUNY established two major programs for educationally disadvantaged students, SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) and College Discovery. These programs offer supportive services, such as counseling, remedial instruction, and financial aid, to participating students.

In 1970, the University established its Open Admissions program which guarantees every New York City resident who earns a high school diploma a place in one of its community or senior colleges.

Student personnel services, in general, and counseling services, in particular, have been an integral and important part of CUNY's special programs for educationally disadvantaged students.

Since the overall effectiveness of counseling programs depends, in large part, upon the effectiveness with which counselors execute their professional activities, there is a pressing need for research intended to determine the relationship of selected variables to counselor performance. This is especially true within CUNY since both the size and scope of its Departments of Student Personnel Services have expanded greatly as a result of the University having established various programs for educationally disadvantaged students. Within this context, this investigation was undertaken to determine the relationship of the importance attached to selected professional activities, administrative aspirations, and selected demographic characteristics to performance evaluations among full-time lower level general counselors within CUNY. Such counselors render a variety of services to students. Unlike middle and upper level counselors, they bear no responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of other counselors.

While no investigators have previously studied the relationship of the importance attached to selected professional activities, administrative aspirations, and selected demographic characteristics to performance evaluations among student personnel administrators, in general, or lower level general counselors, in particular, some investigators, such as Hoyt and Rhatigan (1968) and O'Banion (1970), have studied the importance student personnel administrators attach to selected professional activities. In such studies, the administrators' responses have often been compared to those of other groups, such as university administrators and students.

The administrative aspirations of student personnel administrators, in general, or lower level general counselors, in particular, have not been previously studied.

Those investigators, such as Rosen (1966), Mendoza (1968), Lucero (1970), and Martin (1972), who studied the relationship of certain variables, such as personality factors or biographical data, to performance did so among graduate students in counseling programs rather than among counselors employed by institutions of higher education as in this investigation.

## Method

During the 1973-74 academic year, 86% (N = 150) of the 175 lower level general counselors employed full-time by the Departments of Student Personnel Services within five community colleges and two senior colleges of CUNY completed the investigator's Professional Activities Questionnaire along with a personal data form. The questionnaire is based upon a list of professional activities developed in 1964 by the Commission on Professional Development of the Council of Student Personnel Associations (COSPA) in Higher Education (O'Banion, 1970, pp. 300-302). They indicated, numerically, the importance they attach to each of 16 activities for the development and/or maintenance of a counseling program within CUNY. The sums of their responses constituted their professional activities scores (temporal stability coefficient, .59).

The subjects' administrative aspiration scores (temporal stability coefficient, .67) consisted of their responses to item 17, presented below, of the Professional Activities Questionnaire.

Item 17: To what degree do you desire obtaining a position which bears responsibility for the development, coordination, and evaluation of one or more student personnel services?

Scale

1 = No desire or slight desire

2 = Moderate desire

3 = Moderately strong desire

4 = Strong desire

5 = Very strong desire

Their immediate supervisors completed the investigator's Performance Evaluation Questionnaire which is based upon guidelines employed within CUNY for performance evaluations of nonteaching instructional staff members (City University of New York, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Staff Relations, 1973, p. 6). Numerically, they responded to nine questions concerning the effectiveness with which a counselor executes his professional activities. The sums of their supervisors' responses constituted the counselors' performance evaluation scores (temporal stability coefficient, .87). There was no significant difference at the .01 level of significance between the mean score obtained by those counselors who completed a Professional Activities Questionnaire and the mean score obtained by those who did not complete one.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to explore the possibility of predicting a counselor's performance evaluation score from his professional activities and administrative aspiration

scores, the number of years he has spent in his present position, whether or not he has earned a doctorate or is matriculated for one, and his sex.

## Results

The results of the multiple regression analysis were used in addition to data treated with other statistical procedures, such as the computation of mean scores and standard deviations, in the development of a profile of lower level general counselors employed full-time within CUNY.

### Demographic Characteristics

Based upon the data collected through the personal data form included with the Professional Activities Questionnaire, it may be concluded, in summary, that lower level general counselors within CUNY are relatively young, inexperienced, and far less likely than full-time teaching faculty members within the University to possess a doctorate. Furthermore, less than half of the subjects matriculated in a graduate program at the time the data were collected were majoring in a field of study closely related to student personnel work, such as counselor education, guidance and counseling, counseling psychology, higher education, or student personnel administration.

### Administrative Aspiration Scores

The mean score was 3.26 with a standard deviation of 1.3. It may be concluded that lower level general counselors within CUNY have a moderately strong desire to obtain a middle or upper level administrative position within the field of student personnel services. Furthermore, on the basis of the standard deviation of their scores, it may be concluded

that more than 84% of the subjects had at least a moderate desire to obtain such a position.

Professional Activities Scores

The subjects' professional activities scores, which consisted of the sums of their responses to items 1 through 16 of the Professional Activities Questionnaire, had a mean of 60.35 with a standard deviation of 8.55.

Mean scores and standard deviations are presented below, beside the individual items of the Professional Activities Questionnaire.

Responses were based upon the following rating scale.

Scale

1 = Not important or slightly important

2 = Moderately important

3 = Important

4 = Very important

5 = Most important

| Administrative Activities | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Determining objectives and planning, organizing, and coordinating the counseling program | 4.39 | .87 |
| 2. Selecting, training, and supervising the counseling staff | 4.25 | .93 |
| 3. Participating in the policy formulation of the institution | 3.79 | .98 |
| 4. Planning and managing physical facilities related to the counseling program | 3.14 | 1.06 |

| | | The Relationship | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8 | |
| | | M | SD |
| 5. | Planning and administering budgets for the counseling program | 3.39 | 1.01 |
| 6. | Identifying, analyzing, and solving problems through the application of principles of administration | 3.18 | 1.09 |
| 7. | Communicating with all appropriate and relevant groups in the institution and the community | 3.86 | .99 |
| 8. | Acting as a catalyst for institutional and student response to changing conditions | 3.80 | 1.06 |
| | Educational Activities | | |
| 9. | Helping students to examine, define, and strengthen their values and to learn to act responsibly in their academic, social, and civic relationships | 4.46 | .86 |
| 10. | Advising students concerning courses and programs | 3.92 | .92 |
| 11. | Teaching human relations skills | 3.85 | 1.03 |
| 12. | Stimulating the development of student activities | 3.22 | 1.05 |
| 13. | Counseling students on various kinds and levels of problems | 4.42 | .81 |

| | Professional Activities | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | Developing and strengthening the professional philosophy, ethics, and standards of counselors engaged in student personnel work | 3.73 | 1.15 |
| 15. | Maintaining professional communication with other counselors engaged in student personnel work | 3.63 | .99 |
| 16. | Promoting the recruitment and professional education of qualified persons for counseling positions within student personnel services programs | 3.35 | 1.12 |

It may be concluded, on the basis of the individual mean scores, that lower level general counselors within CUNY consider each of the 16 professional activities to be important or very important for the development and/or maintenance of a counseling program within the University. Furthermore, on the basis of the standard deviations of their scores, it may be concluded that more than 84% of the subjects considered each of the 16 activities to be at least moderately important.

Some activities, however, received significantly higher ratings than others. For example, a critical ratio for testing the significance of the difference between two correlated means was computed for item nine, which received the highest mean rating (4.46), and item four, which received the

lowest mean rating (3.14). There was a significant difference at the .01 level of significance.

Performance Evaluation Scores

The subjects' performance evaluation scores, which consisted of the sums of their immediate supervisors' responses to the individual items of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire, had a mean of 32.74 with a standard deviation of 7.41.

Mean scores and standard deviations are presented below, beside the individual items of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire. The appropriate rating scale for each item is also presented.

Scale

1 = Not effective or slightly effective

2 = Moderately effective

3 = Effective

4 = Very effective

5 = Most effective

| | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 1. How effective is this individual in carrying out the professional activities associated with the job requirements for the position which he occupies, e.g., conducting student interviews? | 3.80 | .97 |

| | | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | How effective is this individual in carrying out the technical activities associated with the job requirements for the position which he occupies, e.g., the development and maintenance of student records? | 3.81 | .93 |
| 3. | How effective is this individual in working well with others within his department (quality of interpersonal relationships), e.g., ability to enlist and give cooperation? | 3.77 | .98 |
| 4. | How effective is this individual in working well with others outside of his department including individuals and groups not affiliated with the College (quality of interpersonal relationships), e.g., ability to enlist and give cooperation? | 3.69 | .98 |
| 5. | How effective is this individual in contributing to the positive morale of his work groups, e.g., ability to adjust to stress brought about by changing situations and organizational adjustments? | 3.54 | .97 |

| | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 6. How effective is this individual in benefiting from the supervision of his activities by others? | 3.56 | 1.00 |

Scale

1 = Not accepting or slightly accepting

2 = Moderately accepting

3 = Accepting

4 = Very accepting

5 = Most accepting

| | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 7. How accepting is this individual of institutionally defined job requirements for the position he occupies? | 3.68 | 1.01 |

Scale

1 = Not willing or slightly willing

2 = Moderately willing

3 = Willing

4 = Very willing

5 = Most willing

| | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 8. How willing is this individual to subordinate his personal desires to the job requirements for the position he occupies? | 3.57 | 1.01 |

| | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 9. How willing would you be to recommend this individual for a position which bears responsibility for the development, coordination, and evaluation of one or more student personnel services? | 3.27 | 1.23 |

It may be concluded, on the basis of the individual mean scores, that lower level general counselors within CUNY are considered very effective with respect to items one through six by their immediate supervisors, very accepting with respect to item seven, and very willing with respect to item eight. In addition, their immediate supervisors are generally willing to recommend them for positions which bear responsibility for the development, coordination, and evaluation of one or more student personnel services. Furthermore, on the basis of the standard deviations of their scores, it may be concluded that in more than 84% of the cases, the subjects' immediate supervisors considered them to be effective with respect to items one through six, accepting with respect to item seven, and willing with respect to item eight. In more than 84% of the cases, the subjects' immediate supervisors were at least moderately willing to recommend them for a middle or upper level administrative position within the field of student personnel services.

## Discussion

Since lower level general counselors within CUNY consider each of the 16 activities presented in the Professional Activities Questionnaire to be important or very important for the development and/or maintenance of a counseling program within the University, it would be appropriate for the

University's Departments of Student Personnel Services to develop counseling programs based, in part, upon these 16 professional activities. Furthermore, it would seem reasonable to expect lower level general counselors to be generally receptive to such newly developed programs especially if they include the opportunity for them to assume some administrative responsibilities since, as a group, they have a moderately strong desire to obtain a middle or upper level administrative position within the field of student personnel services.

Both Lewis (1973, p. 9) and Warnath (1972, p. 229) expressed the belief that counselors must clarify the focus of their responsibilities in operational terms in order not to have unrealistic demands projected upon them. Consequently, the process of developing counseling programs should involve, in part, the development of formal job descriptions for counselors which include performance expectations. The individual items of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire could be utilized for this purpose.

Since the development of new types of counseling programs may well involve the need to revise graduate level counselor education and related programs, it would be worthwhile for universities with such programs, especially those whose graduates are employed in large numbers by CUNY, to utilize the data obtained through the use of the Professional Activities Questionnaire in making such revisions.

The possibility of using a multiple regression equation to predict the performance evaluation scores of particular lower level general counselors from the importance they attach to a set of selected professional

activities, their administrative aspirations, and selected demographic characteristics -sex, doctoral status, and the number of years spent in their present positions was explored since the opportunity to make such predictions could prove useful to the Deans of Students within CUNY in making decisions concerning personnel deployment, in-service training, reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

Only 8.06% of the variance in performance evaluation scores can be accounted for or explained by differences in the values of the five independent variables cited above. Even after correction for attenuation, only 11.5% of the variance can be accounted for or explained. Consequently, performance evaluation scores cannot be predicted from values of the five independent variables with any degree of accuracy.

In order to account for the findings cited above, the scores received on the individual items of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire by those subjects who completed a Professional Activities Questionnaire were correlated with their performance evaluation scores. The product-moment r correlation coefficients are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item 1 | .81 | Item 6 | .81 |
| Item 2 | .76 | Item 7 | .78 |
| Item 3 | .85 | Item 8 | .77 |
| Item 4 | .78 | Item 9 | .88 |
| Item 5 | .85 | | |

The fact that each of the correlation coefficients is approximately the same in value as the temporal stability coefficient (.87) for performance evaluation scores suggests that either the content and/or format of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire did not permit supervisors to

clearly distinguish among counselors as to their strengths and weaknesses with respect to their performances or the supervisors themselves were not familiar enough with the performances of the counselors they supervise to make such distinctions.

Since the content of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire is based upon guidelines for the evaluation of non-teaching professional personnel within CUNY which were contained in the collective bargaining agreement entered into by the Professional Staff Congress and the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, the investigator presumed that supervisors were familiar enough with the performances of the counselors they supervise to clearly distinguish among them as to their strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, no steps were taken to make certain that supervisors were, in fact, adequately acquainted with the traits of the counselors they rated.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Since this investigation did not result in the development of a method for predicting, with reasonable accuracy, the performances of particular lower level general counselors within CUNY, the following recommendations are offered in the hope that the search for such a method will continue.

1. Future investigations which concern the relationship of the importance attached to selected professional activities to performance evaluations among lower level general counselors or other student personnel workers should involve the use of selected activities which reflect the many important changes which have taken place in American higher

education since the COSPA list of professional activities, upon which the investigator's Professional Activities Questionnaire is based, was developed in 1964.

2. In this investigation, subjects were asked to indicate the importance they attach to various professional activities presented in the Professional Activities Questionnaire. In future investigations, however, subjects could be asked to indicate the degree to which they perform or would be willing to perform certain professional activities. There may be a vast difference between the importance attached to certain activities and the willingness or desire to perform them.

3. In this investigation, the predictor variable, doctoral status, concerned itself with the amounts of graduate studies completed by subjects. In future investigations, however, the subjects' areas of study could serve as a predictor variable. It may be that the areas in which counselors or other student personnel workers undertake graduate studies, such as counselor education, are more closely related to their performances than are the amounts of their graduate studies.

4. In this investigation, the subjects' performance evaluation scores, which were intended as measures of overall performance, consisted of the sums of their immediate supervisors' responses to the individual items of the investigator's Performance Evaluation Questionnaire. Future investigations, however, could involve the relationship of selected predictor variables to particular aspects of performance, such as those identified by the individual items of the Performance Evaluation Questionnaire.

5. Future investigations could involve the use of performance evaluations of counselors or other student personnel workers made by students. The evaluations could be used in place of or in addition to those made by supervisors.

CUNY has made one of the strongest commitments of any institution of higher education in this country to offering a meaningful and enriching collegiate experience to educationally disadvantaged students. If student personnel services, in general, and counseling services, in particular, are to remain an integral and important part of the University's attempts to serve such students, research dealing with the effectiveness of such services, including the prediction of counselor performance, must continue.

References

City University of New York. Office of the Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Staff Relations. CUNY contract administration - guidelines and procedures, instructional staff 1972-1975. New York: Author, 1973.

Hoyt, D. P., & Rhatigan, J. J. Professional preparation of junior and senior college students personnel administrators. The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1968, 47, 263-270.

Lewis, C. L. College student personnel: a current estimate. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1973, 14, 5-9.

Lucero, D. L. An analysis of the relationship of values and needs to counselor effectiveness in a selected group of counselors in training (Doctoral dissertation, The University of New Mexico, 1970). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1971, 31, 6346A. (University Microfilms No. 71-12,787).

Martin, J. G. Counselor need patterns, life history antecedents, and counselor effectiveness (Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1973, 34, 137A-138A. (University Microfilms No. 73-15,832).

Mendoza, B. F. Predicting counselor effectiveness: a multiple regression approach (Doctoral dissertation, Western Michigan University, 1968). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1969, 30, 552A-553A. (University Microfilms No. 69-12,014).

O'Banion, T. The functions of college and university student personnel workers. College and University, 1970, 45, 296-304.

Rosen, J. The predictive value of personal characteristics associated with counselor competency (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1966). Dissertation Abstracts, 1967, 27, 2408A-2409A. (University Microfilms No. 67-134).

Warnath, C. F. College counseling: between the rock and the hard place. The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1972, 51, 229-234.